

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

IO-11 AF-06 EB-07 AGR-05 HEW-02 SIL-01 LAB-04 DHA-02

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5617

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 212

USMISSION NATO ALSO FOR AMBASSADOR CARLUCCI

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: AGRARIAN REFORM DEMONSTRATION IN BRAGA

REF: (A) 75 LISBON 7449 (DTG 151636Z DEC 75),

(B) LISBON 0069 (DTG 061556Z JAN 76)

SUMMARY: THOUSANDS OF FARMERS GATHERED IN BRAGA JAN 11 TO
PROTEST AGRARIAN REFORM MEASURES AND EXPRESS LACK OF CONFIDENCE
IN SOCIALIST MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. BRAGA DEMONSTRATION
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EXPLOITED FEARS AND DISCONTENT OF RURAL POPULATION AND ANGOLAN

REFUGEES. MANY SPEAKERS WENT BEYOND ISSUE OF AGRARIAN REFORM TO ATTACK GOVERNMENT. DEMONSTRATION REFLECTS GROWING CONSERVATIVE PRESSURE WHICH HAS ALREADY PULLED POPULAR DEMOCRATS TO RIGHT. END SUMMARY.

1. AGRARIAN REFORM PROTEST: CROWD ESTIMATED BY AMCONSUL OBSERVER AT FIFTY THOUSAND INCLUDING SOME ANGOLAN REFUGEES, GATHERED IN BRAGA JAN 11 TO PROTEST AGRARIAN REFORM MEASURES. THE RESPONDED TO APPEAL OF CONSERVATIVE REGIONAL SECRETARIAT OF LANDOWNERS' CONFEDERATION. MEETING APPROVED MOTION WHICH ACCEPTED PRINCIPLE OF AGRARIAN REFORM BUT MADE FOLLOWING DEMANDS:

- IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION OF LAWS ON EXPROPRIATION.
- REJECTION OF PARTY EFFORTS TO REACH PRIVATE AGREEMENTS ON AGRARIAN REFORM.
- REJECTION OF EXISTING DEFINITION OF SMALL AND MEDIUM LAND-OWNERS.
- REJECTION OF ROLE FOR AGRICULTURAL UNIONS IN AGRARIAN REFORM.

MOTION ALSO EXPRESSED LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN SOCIALIST MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE LOPES CARDOSO AND EXTENDED DEADLINE FOR FULFILLMENT OF DEMANDS FROM JAN 15 TO FEB 2 (REF A). ANOTHER RALLY WAS SCHEDULED FOR JAN 14 IN CALDAS DA RAINHA, 50 MILES NORTH OF LISBON.

2. ORGANIZATION: SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CENTER PARTY (CDS) AND MINUSCULE POPULAR MONARCHIST PARTY (PPM) WERE ACTIVE IN ORGNAIZING DEMONSTRATION. CDS ISSUED STATEMENTS JAN 11 OPPOSING AGRARIAN REFORM AGREEMENT REACHED BY THREE GOVERNING PARTIES JAN 5 "WITHOUT CONSULTATION OR DISCUSSION WITH FARMERS THEMSELVES" (REF B). PPM HAD ISSUED SIMILAR STATEMENT JAN 8. FAR RIGHT GROUPS INCLUDING THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PORTUGAL (MDLP) ARE ALSO BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN ACTIVE IN ORGANIZING BRAGA MEETING; MDLP SUPPORTERS WERE AMONG ORGANIZERS OF DEC 14 MEETING OF LANDOWNERS AT RIO MAIOR. POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PPD) ISSUED STATEMENT JAN 8 WHICH BACKED AWAY SOMEWHAT FROM THREE-PARTY ACCORD ON AGRARIAN REFORM. PPD ALSO ENGAGED IN HASTY, LAST-MINUTE EFFORTS TO OBTAIN LEADERSHIP ROLE AT BRAGA MEETING.

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3. CHURCH ROLE?: "DIARIO DE NOTICIAS," (DN) NOW UNDER SOCIALIST EDITOR, CARRIED FRONT-PAGE EDITORIAL JAN 12 ON "THE CHURCH AND THE STATE." EDITORIAL CALLED FOR GOVERNMENT TO TAKE POSITIVE STEPS TO INCLUDE CHURCH IN MOVEMENT TOWARD DEMOCARCY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND CAUTIONED AGAINST CHURCH INVOLVEMENT IN PARTISAN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.

4. COMMENT: BRAGA DEMONSTRATION EXPLOITED FEARS AND DISCONTENT

OF RURAL POPULATION AND ANGOLAN REFUGEES DESPITE FACT AGRARIAN
REFORM HAS NOT TOUCHED FAR NORTH. MANY SPEAKERS AT BRAGA WENT
BEYOND ISSUE OF AGRARIAN REFORM TO ATTACK DECOLONIZATION.
DN EDITORIAL ECHOED FEARS OF SOCIALISTS
THAT A STRENGTHENED CHURCH MIGHT SUPPORT ANTI-GOVERNMENT
ACTIVITIES OF THE RIGHT. PPD HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY CONCERNED
THAT IT MIGHT LOSE ITS STRONG RURAL SUPPORT IN THE CONSERVA-
TIVE NORTH TO EITHER THE CDS OR A FAR RIGHT GROUP. GROWING PRESSURE
HAS ALREADY PULLED THE PPD TO THE RIGHT.
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